

The Cost of Car Racing

SIR.—In a paper such as **THE SUNDAY TIMES**, one expects to find accurate and objective reporting on matters of fact together with well-informed comment in any expressions of opinion. It is, therefore, regrettable to find Atticus guilty last Sunday not only of inaccuracy concerning a matter of established fact, but also of an ignorant expression of opinion.

In his paragraph referring to the death of Mr. John Michael Lyons, son of our chairman and managing director, Atticus first states that he was killed "ten days ago." The fatal accident having occurred on June 5, the period of time was, therefore, a fortnight and not ten days. Next, he uses only Mr. Lyons's second Christian name and one by which he was never known. Finally, your contributor states that Mr. Lyons's son was killed whilst on his way to deliver a new "D" type Jaguar in time for the Le Mans race. This is untrue. A few of the early agency reports did state that he was driving a "D" type competition model. In actual fact he was driving his personal saloon car.

Coming now to your contributor's opinions on matters concerning motor racing and the design and construction of cars taking part in them; he is, of course, entitled to air his views, but when he makes statements on matters of technical fact which are not only false, but which denigrate the efforts of some of the best brains in the industry who, in the develop-

ment of the disc brake, are making an invaluable contribution to public safety on the roads, then he deserves the sharpest censure.

His statement that "the life of the disc brakes used at Le Mans is little more than the twenty-four hours of the race" is ludicrous. The whole essence of the effectiveness of the disc brake is its resistance to deterioration or "fade" and its ability to outlast any other form of brake even when subjected to abnormal stresses imposed under racing conditions.

Finally, your contributor's sweeping statement that the cars (at Le Mans) "bear little relation to the models the public buys" is ill-informed comment. Whilst many cars in this race may be so described, many more, including the Jaguar, are production models raced in substantially the same form and constructed from the same components as those sold to the public.

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ATTICUS writes: My slip about the date was due to my writing the paragraph a few days before it was actually printed. For this and for inaccuracies due to my having relied on reports in the responsible daily Press which I had not seen corrected, I am glad to have this opportunity of apologising. My information on the disc brake and the modified production cars raced at Le Mans was obtained from a director of one of Britain's greatest car-manufacturing firms. In no way was I denigrating the disc brake itself or its developers.